

ed by a brother who wrote "There is in my opinion entirely too much of this report. It is not possible, as most such data is not kept to give definite reply to many of the questions." And by another who wrote, "I do not understand what gain it can bring to the Brethren church to make inquiry into all the minutest details of the work done by the brotherhood." Some did not fill out the blanks because they did not have the information asked for and were irritated because the secretary wanted information which had not been kept. The other failed to fill out the blank because he did not see the use of it. And these two reasons supply the reason of the difficulty which a secretary must battle with in getting a report and which the church must overcome. Because, at bottom, both these states of mind are to blame for many of the things now existing which ought to be done away.

However poor was the list of questions, it admirably served one purpose of its use, viz., to learn whether our pastors and church clerks are keeping a record of the doings of the church. The replies demonstrated the fact, deplorable indeed, that the pastors and churches as a rule with some notable exceptions, are not recording their work. Brother pastors, this ought not to be. Record your work. It leads to system. System leads to thoroughness, one of the first requisites of success. The churches ought to make more careful record of their work. Each church should have on its records all of the things at least which were asked for in the blank. They ought to know how much money they have raised in a year for church work and what this was spent for. They should know how many members they have, when received, how many male and how many female, how many young men among them, etc. Why? Because, we owe a debt to the future, if for no other reason. What will the future know of our work, to be inspired by our methods, our zeal etc., if we do not record the work done. Besides, nothing so stirs up a church as the cold facts about its condition. If these were put down in black and white, read at the church meeting once a year and compared with that of other years or of other churches. The devil is the author of confusion. He hates the light of facts, ergo, let the churches have their records kept so that the devil cannot hide a falsity beneath the ignorance of real conditions.

I trust that the questions have made some of us see in what confusion we have been living and improve. Brethren, please send in the blanks you have received. Fill them out as well as you can. Take time to get as reliable information as you can and then send them to

me as soon as possible. May God stir us up as a church to make more of systematic records.

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#### AN EXPLANATION

W. M. LYON

With the kind permission of the editor, I wish to call attention to a false impression which seems to have been made on the minds of some of the German Baptist Brethren in reading my article in EVANGELIST No. 16, where I make reference to their sisters who are engaged as servants in the city. It appears that they take my language to convey a reflection upon labor of that kind. I am unable to understand how such meaning can be taken from my words in the article referred to. Besides, all who know me best know that I respect and honor those who fill such places. My work and record here will bear witness. It was far from my intention to cast any reflection whatever, and if I have hurt the feelings of any among our German Baptist Brethren, I ask pardon. Many of our best friends and some of the strongest supporters of our mission are still identified with the German Baptists and we would not for one moment cast the least reflection upon any of them or any of their denomination, no matter how humble the position they fill. My point was, (and I think clearly stated) that those who hold places here as servants are not supposed to be *permanently located*, and therefore, can not prove of as much advantage to the cause as they would be under the other conditions referred to. Trusting that this may make the matter perfectly clear to all concerned, and believing that every unbiased mind will admit the correctness of my position.

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#### MINISTERIAL CULPABILITY

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The present neglect of Sabbath observance that is engaging the attention of persons interested in the welfare of the church, is only one of many indications of the decay of religious faith among the people of this country. There is a marked loss of spiritual fervor everywhere. As ministers, we know that it is more difficult than ever to arouse enthusiasm in our flocks. Even the most energetic and skilled revivalists fail to do so; and evangelistic labors in the various churches, have been in recent years, largely without adequate results. In short, there appears to be creeping over this country a sort of moral paralysis which the church seems powerless to arrest.

This condition of affairs, both in the church and out is accounted for in various ways by various persons. The laity say that it is the fault of the ministry,

that the ministers have no salt in them and in consequence are powerless to draw men and stem the growing tide of worldliness and indifference; and the ministers say that they are doing all they can do and that the laity are to blame for the spiritual sloth that has come over the churches.

Complaints as to this deplorable condition of affairs are both loud and universal. The ministers of our cities, both large and small, have the same sad story to tell. In many places, the matter has been brought before the regular Ministerial Association, and inquiry made into the causes of this moral decadence and what the ministry can do to bring about a spiritual awakening.

A few months ago a meeting of this kind was held in the state of Connecticut. We were much interested in the report of this meeting; so much so, that after reading the report, we determined to express our own convictions as to the cause or causes of this moral decadence, together with what we think is needed if there is to come, a spiritual awakening in this country. And in doing so, we are not giving you the dust from off our book shelves, but what we have learned from actual work among people, both in the church and out, that are indifferent to the work of the church, and in many instances that have lost all respect for the church as an institution.

The answers given by the several ministers in the meeting already referred to, are as many as the ministers attempting an answer to the question, "What can the ministers do to bring about a spiritual awakening?" The first one in answer to the question said, "that the people of today have *hazy* ideas about sin and the duty of the ministry is to correct and clarify these ideas." The second replied by giving his own early experience when he had a loathing of sin because of the preaching of hell-fire, and thought, to use the words of Dr. Henson, of Chicago, "that the ministry should preach hell-fire until the audience could smell brimstone." The third said that people today did not estimate the worth of the soul nor realize what was meant by the loss of the soul. And still another said that a great deal of fault is to be found with prevalent preaching. The ministry, he said, should preach repentance, faith in Christ and kindred themes.

We think that this last one hit the nail squarely on the head. And in taking this position we are not unmindful of the fact that we are a part of the ministry. What we say, therefore refers as much to us as to any other. A gun always rebounds with the same force that is used in projecting its discharge.

Neither would we be understood to be placing the sole responsibility for the present state of affairs upon the ministry alone. But our contention is that the